

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 CU-02 OMB-01 SCCT-01 SY-04 /061 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9359

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 20037

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJ: YALA KIDNAPPINGS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION BANGKOK FM SONGKHLA DEC 26 RPTD
FOR YOUR INFO:

SONGKHLA 052

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS TH

SUBJ: YALA KIDNAPPINGS

REF: SONGKHLA 050

1. BANGKOK ENGLISH PRESS ASIDE, REAL METHOD OF TEACHER'S
ESCAPE FROM YALA KIDNAPPING (REFTEL) STILL UNCLEAR. ONE RUMOR NOW
HAS IT THAT RTG LOCAL OFFICIALS PAID RANSOM QUIETLY TO DEFUSE
PROTEST AND HALT EMBARRASSING SITUATION. WHILE THIS PROBABLY UNTRUE,
BELIEF THAT IT OCCURRED HELPED PROLONG DEMONSTRATION AFTER
TEACHERS' RELEASE. PAYING RANSOMS DOWN HERE IS ACCEPTED AS
REASONABLE WAY OF DOING BUSINESS, SO STORY HELPED FUEL DEMANDS OF
PROTESTERS WHO WANT FIRMER RTG HAND IN SECURITY SITUATION
AND TRANSFER OF CORRUPT OFFICIALS.

2. PROTESTERS SAW RESULTS OF LARGEST GATHERING EVER, AND
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WE COULD EXPECT MORE IN FUTURE. KNOWN CORRUPT OFFICIALS NOW

BEING CHALLENGED BY NAME, AND DEMONSTRATORS EVEN SPILLED OVER
INTO SONGKHLA WITH PROTEST AT GOVERNOR'S HOUSE DECEMBER 23
AND COMMENTS ON HIS NONE-TOO-CLEAN REPUTATION.

3. DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHO IS EXPLOITING SITUATION NOW. FAR-
RIGHT COULD USE ISSUE TO SHOW WEAKNESS OF SANYA GOVERNMENT
AND ELECTED POLITICIANS IN GENERAL (SARIT STILL POPULAR NAME
IN SECURITY MATTERS DOWN HERE). LEFTISTS USING ISSUE TOO,
BUT AS OF NOW NONE EXPECTED TO WIN SEATS IN FAR SOUTH.
MOST MUSLIM MP'S EXPECTED TO WIN THERE ARE RUNNING FOR OLD-REGIME
PARTIES AND NOT EXPECTED CHANGE SWEETHEART CONTRACT MUCH ONCE
ELECTED.
CASTRODALE
KINTNER

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NNN

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